

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 SR-02 ORM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2859

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, PFOR, PK, IN, BG

SUBJ: EXCHANGE OF BENGALEES, NON-BENGALEES AND PAK POW'S.

REF: ISLAMABAD 0047

1. FOREIGN MINISTER SPOKESMAN JANUARY 12 DENIED REPORTED CHARGES BY INDIA AND BANGLADESH THAT PAKS WERE DRAGGING THEIR FEET IN CLEARING NON-BENGALEES FOR TRANSPORTATION TO PAKISTAN UNDER DELHI AGREEMENT. SPOKESMAN TOLD PRESS THAT DELAY I* MOVEMENT OF NON-BENGALEES RESULTED ENTIRELY FROM BDG FAILURE TO LOCATE AND ASSEMBLE THOSE ALREADY CLEARED BY GOP.

2. SPOKESMAN CLAIMED PAKS HAD SO FAR GRANTED CLEARANCE FOR TOTAL OF 58,000 NON-BENGALEES IN FIRST THREE CATEGORIES SPECIFIED BY DELHI AGREEMENT. OF THESE, 36,300 HAD REACHED PAKISTAN UP TO JANUARY 11. REMAINDER
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HAD NOT YET BEEN MOVED BECAUSE OF INEFFICIENCY DACCA

AUTHORITIES, SPOKESMAN CHARGED. PAKS WERE ALSO AWAITING APPLICATIONS FROM THE 25,000 NON-BENGALEES WHOM GOP HAS AGREED ACCEPT ON HARDSHIP GROUNDS. SPOKESMAN NOTED THAT IN ADDITION TO FOREGOING, ABOUT 20,000 NON-BENGALEES HAD REACHED PAKISTAN THROUGH BURMA AND NEPAL.

3. AS OF JANUARY 11, SPOKESMAN ADDED, 79,950 BENGALEES HAD BEEN REPATRIATED TO BANGLADESH, INCLUDING ALL FORMER BENGALI MILITARY AND CIVIL SERVICE PERSONNEL. ONLY ABOUT 40,000 BENGALEES, ALL CIVILIANS, REMAIN TO BE REPATRIATED. AT SAME TIME, 46,075 PAK POW'S HAD RETURNED FROM INDIA, WITH ANOTHER 47,000 OR SO STILL TO COME.

4. IN SPEARATE STATEMENT, GOP ANNOUNCED THAT MESSAGE HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM DELHI TO EFFECT GOI WOULD CONTINUE DAILY REPATRIATION OF POW'S AT WADAH THROUGH JANUARY 23, RATHER THAN REVERTING TO EARLIER ALTERNATE-DAY SCHEDULE. ANNOUNCEMENT NOTED THAT INDIANS HAD GIVEN NO INFORMATION ABOUT EXTRA TRAINS FOR POW REPATRIATION, WHICH PAKS ASSERT THEY HAD BEEN PROMISED IN ORDER MAKE UP FOR TIME LOST DURING DECEMBER RAIL STRIKE IN INDIA.

5. COMMENT. DESPITE CONTINUING DRUMFIRE OF CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES, EXCHANGES APPEAR TO BE PROCEEDING NORMALLY ONCE AGAIN AFTER DECEMBER SLOW-DOWN. IF INDIANS CONTINUE DAILY REPATRIATION POW'S FOR ANOTHER TEN DAYS OR SO AT CURRENT RATE, THIS SHOULD OVERCOME EFFECT OF RAIL STRIKE. WITH REGARD QUIBBLING OVER WHO IS TO BLAME FOR SLOW MOVEMENT NON-BENGALEES, WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE DELIBERATE GOP STALLING ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, PAKS ARE NOT EXACTLY ENTHUSIASTIC OVER THIS PARTICULAR EXERCISE. BYROADE

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